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SUBJECT: YAOUNDE EAC MEETS TO DISCUSS REVERSE TRIPWIRES

REF: A. YAOUNDE 0121

[1](#)B. YAOUNDE 0182

[1](#)C. YAOUNDE 0187

[1](#)1. (SBU) Embassy Yaounde expanded Emergency Action Committee met on March 17 to discuss the security situation and reverse tripwires following recent violent civil unrest in Cameroon. The EAC was chaired by the DCM and in attendance were RSO, DAO, POL/ECON, CONS, PA, HU, MGMT, GSO, CLO and Peace Corps. The EAC concluded that the following reverse tripwires have been met:

- No demonstrations or incidents of social unrest, including looting have taken place since February 29.
- The anticipated long-term disruption of utilities, gas, water, goods and services, and communications has not materialized.
- The increased crime threat that was fueled by the economic crisis and transportation strike causing large-scale demonstrations, civil disturbances and widespread public unrest has returned to previous critical levels.
- There has been no decrease in the number of available commercial flights in or out of country and there is no longer any difficulty in transit to the airport. All airlines are running normal schedules.
- The normal noticeable lag in response time by host government to official security requests exists. The lag time continues but the Embassy is not making any specific security requests.
- Deployment of military forces in Douala and other cities has been scaled back though plainclothes security agents continue to operate in larger than usual numbers in key areas.
- The American School of Yaounde and American School of Douala reopened on March 4 and are back on a normal school schedule.
- The road between Yaounde and Douala is open and, from a security standpoint, is safe to travel again.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The situation in Cameroon has largely returned to a state of pre-crisis normalcy. The Government of Cameroon offered price relief in gasoline and some basic food commodities. The President chaired a special Cabinet meeting to underscore the urgency of making some economic adjustments and parliament began its March session normally.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Nonetheless, many of the underlying problems which sparked the recent unrest remain unresolved. Socio-economic malaise is deep and not easily addressed in the short term. The GRC's heavy handed clamp down after the riots has fueled frustration about intimidation of the media, lack of due process in trials, and alleged human rights abuses. The main opposition SDF party is angry at Minister of Territorial

Administration Marafa Hamidou,s recent statements blaming the riots on SDF leader John Fru Ndi. The role of alleged manipulators behind the recent events remains unclear, with rumors in the air of an imminent Cabinet shuffle and efforts to arrest corrupt officials. Many believe President Biya will introduce to the current parliamentary session an amendment to the constitution eliminating term limits. All of these factors combine to make for a high level of uncertainty. Our judgment is that for the moment many Cameroonians are tired of the violence and afraid to take on the security forces again. However, while these risk factors could take some time to boil over, they could result in further civil unrest at any time.

¶4. (SBU) For each of the above reverse tripwires, the EAC concluded that there is no significant likelihood that the current security situation will return suddenly to crisis levels. The EAC therefore recommended to Ambassador that post request the Department to scale back from Authorized Departure status and downgrade the current Travel Warning to a Travel Alert. Post will continue to closely monitor and assess all factors that could trigger renewed violence. POC for this cable is RSO Laura D. Williams.

GARVEY